TWO WAYS OF WOOING

Stoop and pick up a handful of shells from that broad path which you have been mistakenly regarding as a gravel walk. If you are one of the learned ones of the earth those small mollusks may teach you that you are near the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and, for aught that I know of such matters, may inform you that you are on the coast of the State of Mississippi.

Now, if you add the pursuit of literature to that of science, look well around you; for here that most valuable literary raw material, local color of the southern type, has been most lavishly poured out. Here are magnolias, oleanders and all other southern trees and shrubs! There, in that arch of confederate jasmine, two mocking birds have their habitat. They have been fighting since daybreak with every living thing that has approached them; but you need not put that in your article.

Behind you is a broad galleried, deep roofed mansion of the most approved antebellum architecture, and before you is the bluest water in the world—credo me experto who have seen the Adriatic and the Caribbean seas. Its beauty is marred by long dilapidated piers, but you will not complain of them when the mosquitoes swarm in from the Louisiana marshes and drive you out into the sea breeze.

From where you stand you can see through the great hall of the house, quite through to where the pine forest stands out against the sky. It was not many months ago that a party of three—to me at that time a most interesting party—made that hall their assembly room and temple for their household gods. Indeed, it was often their battle-ground, for in the long leisure of summer days the coating of conventionality in talk wears rather thin, and behind that coating are often concealed the most startling beliefs in persons of the most unimpeached respectability. At such times the sole male member of the trio was apt to begin the discussion with smooth appeals to experience, policy and knowledge of the world, which happened to be his particular divinities, and like other priests of Baal, he sometimes appealed long, loudly and in vain.

It was after one of the longest and warmest of these debates that all three sat ostensibly deep in their morning's mail. John Dunn, the lone champion of the commonplace, tore through a small pile of letters with an air of mysterious importance, which he had been early taught it was necessary to assume in order to attain business success. As he had attained that great and noble desideratum, and in no small degree, he might be fairly credited with a knowledge of the necessary methods. One of his fair antagonists, Constance Alston, who had played a heated, enthusiastic and altogether minor part in the discussion, had forgotten the whole matter in a bulky letter addressed in a broad masculine hand.

Presently she looked up. "What's today—the day of the month I mean?" she asked. And then, without waiting for an answer: "Fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth. They will be here today. He writes that he will be here tomorrow—that is today of course; and he is going to bring a friend with him." She buried herself again in the letter and emerged with further intelligence: "His friend's name—I am not sure how to pronounce it. Alice," she said, turning to her cousin, the last of the trio, with a mischievous look, "how do you pronounce B-e-a-l-l?"

If her object was to create either surprise or confusion on the part of her cousin the attempt was a flat failure, for that young lady answered imperturbably:

"Bell of course. You know the name well enough. You can hardly have forgotten him since last winter."

"Was he a Johns Hopkins man—a fellow?" asked Dunn with interest.

"Yes, we knew him at Baltimore," answered Alice.

"Well, he's stopped all that," said Dunn, presumably referring to the pursuit of knowledge by means of fellowships. "One of his rich relatives died this spring, and he's pretty well fixed."

"I suppose we know all about him now," said Alice, a trifle wearily, and rising she strolled out to the edge of the wide gallery, where she stood pensively looking out, a clear cut figure against the blaze of light from without.

"That's a graceful picture," said Constance warmly.

"Yes, she's a very pretty young girl," answered Dunn indifferently. He proved the genuineness of his indifference by carrying on a very abstracted conversation with Constance for a few moments, and then wandering out with a careful indefiniteness to where Alice stood. To a sensitive man the manner in which he was received would have been equivalent to a verbal denunciation as an unpleasant interruption, but Mr. Dunn's many enemies attributed much of his success to his seldom making such discoveries.

Half a day later and Constance and her correspondent had resolved themselves into a faint splash of oars and a murmur of voices scarcely audible from the pier where Alice was burdened with an embarrassing wealth of companionship. The whilom learned fellow was not obtrusively apparent in a quiet young man leisurely half reclining in the bow of a small skiff of which Alice held the oars. Dunn stood upon the steps leading down to the water, looking despondently at a dark gap between himself and the boat.

"I can't bring the boat any closer on account of these posts," said Alice. "You can't drown anyhow," she added scornfully.

The Persians, I believe, have a saying that contempt will pierce through the shell of a tortoise. Dunn made the attempt with the success which usually attends leaps in the dark. There was a sudden movement of the skiff, which in his cooler moments he attributed solely to his awkwardness. For as he stood a moment later dripping and wrathful upon the steps, he had sundry unpleasant suspicions, mainly due to a faint reminiscence of something unaccountable in that sudden slipping away of the boat from under him.

But a moment's reflection convinced him that it was absurd to suppose that any one should wish to be rid of his society, and even in the most improbable event he felt sure that not even so young a lady as Miss Alston would resort to such an undignified, childish and altogether improper method. The disappearance of these disagreeable suspicions was of course aided by the sincerest regret and sympathy, expressed in a voice which would have made the fortune of an orator or an actress.

"Of course that ends our rowing," said Alice decidedly. "Mr. Beall can go to the house with you, and I will row out and find Constance and Mr. Alexander."

But Dunn, now thoroughly appeased and not over anxious for unsympathetic male companionship in his rather absurd condition, demurred emphatically. How the conclusion was reached he never exactly understood, but somehow after considerable argument and protestation he found himself damply on his way toward the house, while Miss Alston and Mr. Beall had departed on what seemed to him an utterly useless search for the remaining members of the party.

The two rowed on in silence until the sound of Mr. Dunn's creaking steps had died away, then Beall broke the silence by an ineffectual offer to change his seat to the stern.

"This seat is far enough aft to balance the boat," said Alice, with unconscious technicality. "And you may upset her moving about. We don't want any more accidents. I am sorry Mr. Dunn fell over," she added, after a slight pause. If she smiled her face was turned away from Beall and he could not see its expression. "I like him very much," she continued.

"So do I," said Beall, with bitter, youthful irony. "I like his high ideals, and his modest truthfulness, and his culture—don't you?"

"He is my guest," responded Alice coldly.

Beall might have replied that, considering the recent occurrence, her ideas of hospitality were extremely recent and a trifle suspicious. But having no absolute proof of the cause of that happy accident he refrained, and simply asked: "He has another claim to your consideration, hasn't he?"

Alice disdained equivocation. "I suppose," she said, "you mean to ask whether the report of my engagement to him is true."

Beall briefly assented.

"And by what right?" she asked.

"I had the right once," he said sadly.

"Suppose we do not talk about what you once had," said Alice. "You didn't seem to care much about it then."

This startling perversion of the facts bewildered Beall too much for any attempt at defense. He could only ask once more for an answer to his question.

"And if I told you," said Alice, "I suppose you would do as you did on a similar occasion once before—threaten to do something desperate, and then not do it. And I should be so disappointed."

Beall took this rather aggravating remark rather good naturedly. "No; I've learned something since then," he said. "I wished to know about this simply because if you are not engaged to Mr. Dunn I have an important piece of news to tell you."

"I suppose you will pardon my saying that I don't take as much interest as most persons in important pieces of news," said Alice. "But it is due to Mr. Dunn for me to tell you that the report isn't true."

"Then," replied Beall, "I can tell you my news. But if you don't mind I would rather not tell it to the back of your head." So saying he calmly took possession of half of the rowing seat. "What I wished to tell you," he continued, "is that I am going to be married in a few months."

Alice started. "You are! And to whom?"

"That's just the difficulty," he said contemplatively. "I've arranged everything else satisfactorily. My business affairs are all right—right enough for me to marry seven or eight girls if the law permitted. I've thought of everything else. I haven't spoken to the different people, but I suppose there will be no trouble. The only problem is, as you suggest, about the bride. So I came over mainly to ask you to occupy that position."

Alice turned suddenly. "Mr. Beall," she said, "this is a most unpleasant form of joke."

"It isn't a joke at all," he answered placidly. "You laughed at my vehemence and romance about such things once before, so I thought I would try a style you would like. But, on my honor, I never was more in earnest in my life."

Alice drew the blade of her oar slowly through the water for a moment. There was every reason in the world why she should refuse a proposal made in this cool, confident and irritating manner. So, being a woman, she answered finally, "Well, I suppose it would be a pity to break up all your arrangements."

As Beall sat late that night in Mr. Alexander's room enjoying to the utmost the bitter end of a long black cigar, he said charitably, "Now there's Dunn—I don't think he's such a bad sort of fellow after all."

Alexander looked up in humorous surprise from the valise he was packing. "Why," he exclaimed, "you said this morning on the train that you had spent long days in wondering how Dunn had escaped the penitentiary."

"Oh, this morning," answered Beall. "To tell you the truth, old man, I wasn't feeling very well this morning."—Harper's Weekly.

The Cruelty of War.

An incident related in the biography of Sir Provo Wallis, admiral of the British fleet, brings home to the reader the cruel nature of war. It occurred during the war of 1812. An American captain had taken a fine ship to Lisbon, where she had sold her cargo for the use of the British army under Wellington, and received several thousands of dollars in return, which were on board.

Meantime war had been declared, and on her homeward voyage she fell a victim to the British squadron. One of the principal objects of her captors was to obtain information. The American captain was sent on board the Shannon—which afterward captured the famous Chesapeake—but was kept in ignorance of the war and of the fact that he was a prisoner.

He answered unreservedly all the questions put to him, and Captain Broke, who greatly disliked the deception he had been obliged to practice, now felt it difficult to make the prisoner acquainted with the next step which must be taken. At length he forced himself to say:

"Captain, I must burn your ship."

The American, overcome by surprise, faltered, "Burn her?"

"Indeed I must."

"Burn her for what? Will not money save her? She is all my own—and all the property I have in the world. Is it war, then?"

"Yes," said Broke.

Both parties were painfully moved, and the scene did not end without a tear from each, but duty was duty, and the prize was destroyed.—Youth's Companion.

TITLES OF ENGLISH WOMEN.

Distinctions That May Seem Rather Complicated to an American.

It is little wonder that foreigners bungle over our titles as they do, when in our own public speeches and newspapers it is often made plain that many do not understand how to use English titles.

For instance, a marquis' daughter who married a man without a title keeps the title of "lady" and her own Christian name and adds to these the husband's surname.

Thus, when Lady Evelyn Fitzmaurice, the daughter of the Marquis of Landsdowne, married Mr. Victor Cavendish she became Lady Evelyn Cavendish; but the London dailies spoke of "Lady Victor Cavendish's going away dress."

The only case in which a lady of title is called by her husband's Christian name as well as his surname is in the case of the wives of the younger sons of dukes and marquises.

These men bear courtesy titles of "lord" before their Christian names and surnames, as Lord George Hamilton, Lord Charles Beresford, and so on, and the only correct way of addressing or speaking of their wives is the same way, putting "lady" in the place of "lord."

To call the wives of younger sons Lady Hamilton, Lady Beresford, or whatever is the surname, without the male Christian name, is as incorrect as to call Lady Evelyn Cavendish by her husband's full name.

On the other hand, the wife of a baronet or of a knight is "lady," with his surname alone after it.

Confusion grows in many minds from the fact that any peeress (under the rank of a duchess) is also spoken of, and to, by her equals as merely "Lady So-and-so"—the name added, however, not being the family name, but the title of the husband.

Thus no equal would say, "I saw the Marchioness of Salisbury" or "There is the Countess of Lathom," it would be Lady Salisbury and Lady Lathom.

A duchess, the highest rank in the peerage, is the only peeress who escapes this equality of title in the everyday language of her equals in society. She is never called "lady" only, but is spoken of as "the Duchess of So-and-so" in full always, and is addressed in conversation by her friends as "duchess," the name of the peerage not added.

Moreover, every other lady of title, from a knight's wife (which is not a real title), right away up to a marchioness, is equally "my lady" to her social inferiors.

Sir John Smith's wife is Lady Smith. The wife of Lord John Smith, who is a peer's younger son, is Lady John Smith, and if you know her on terms of equality you may call her Lady John, but never Lady Smith. Lady Mary, daughter of either the earl or the marquis, or the duke of somewhere, and the wife of Mr. John Smith, is Lady Mary Smith; call her Lady Mary if she seems friendly, but not Lady Smith or Lady John Smith.

The wife of Lord Smith, or the earl or the marquis of Smithville, you may call Lady Smith or Lady Smithville, as the case may be, but if Smithville is a duke on no account call his wife Lady Smithville.

If you think that she will not snub you as too familiar, you may call her simply "duchess." You may say, "Duchess, may I get you some tea?" for example. But till you know her well, or feel on quite friendly terms, it had better be, "Will your grace take a cup of tea?"

Finally, the oddest thing of all, if fate should make you acquainted with a prince or princess of the blood royal, you will seem very second rate if you keep saying, "your royal highness."

You must say "sir" and "ma'am." Not, if you please, "madam," but "ma'am," as your housemaid says to your own meek better half, Mrs. Smith. Even a duchess calls a princess "ma'am."—London Letter.

Intermarriage in Eurasia.

There is no remote chance of Eurasia ever being reabsorbed by either of its original elements; the prejudices of both Europeans and natives are far too vigorous to permit of much intermarriage with a people who are neither one nor the other. Occasionally an up country planter, predestined to a remote and "jungly" existence, comes down to Calcutta and draws his bride from the upper circles of Eurasia—this not so often now as formerly. Occasionally, too, a young shopman with the red of Scotland fresh in his cheeks is carried off by his landlady's daughter, while Tommy Atkins falls a comparatively easy prey.

The sight of a native with a half caste wife is much rarer, for there Eurasian as well as native antipathy comes into operation. The whole conscious inclination of Eurasian life, in habits, taste, religion and most of all in ambition, is toward the European and away from the native standards.—Sara J. Duncan in Popular Science Monthly.

Virus and Venom.

The difference between venom and a virus is very marked. Both are poisons, and both of organic origin, but a venom is produced in secreting organs, commonly called poison glands, and is introduced into the system by means especially adapted for the purpose, such as stings or fangs. On the other hand, a virus is the result of disease or putrefaction, and generally possesses the property of exciting in the system into which it is introduced the disease which produced the virus. A virus commonly produces little, if any, local disturbance; a venom generally causes great pain, often severe inflammation and swelling. Venom has a marked local effect; virus causes a general disturbance of the system.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Wearing of Rings.

"It is a constant surprise to me," said a man the other day, "that a woman with a palpably ugly hand will call everybody's attention to it by hanging her fingers with sparkling rings. A certain intuitive vanity that is common to men and women alike ought to teach her better. Freckles, big knuckles and ugly or ill kept nails are all accentuated by showy rings. I've seen a woman whose rough, red hand must be her ever present thorn in the flesh load it with big diamonds, the white sparkle and dull gold setting of which intensified the redness and coarseness of the fingers they encircled. I long to tell such a one to put her jewels at her throat, on her arms, in her hair—anywhere but on her hands.

"In contradiction to this I recall a woman of my acquaintance who has a small brown hand like a gypsy's. She has evidently studied its limitations, for she wears never more than one ring, and that always of odd design. I've seen her wear a black pearl sunk in dull silver, a hoop of carbuncles or an old English ring of hammered gold, but she oftenest wears a superb alexandrite that shows black in some lights and deep seagreen in others. I always applaud her wisdom in banishing pearls, emeralds and diamonds or any conventional styles from her ring box."—Her Point of View in New York Times.

Weed Maps in Germany.

The Germans have some educational ideas which we in this country have borrowed with profit, and there are still others which we might be wise to adopt. Among them no doubt are the wall maps of different species of pestiferous weeds, which hang in schoolrooms where the children can see them as long as they go to school.

A practical idea underlies the displaying of these maps. It is well known that farmers are prone to treat all weeds alike, and hardly to observe any difference between them, whereas the natures of weeds differ as much as the natures of other plants do, and the sort of treatment which will exterminate one will sometimes increase and multiply another.

It is important therefore that the farmer and gardener should understand the weeds which they are trying to exterminate.

It is here that these German wall maps come in. They show colored pictures of the most pestiferous weeds, in all stages of growth, and also the ways in which they scatter their seeds and propagate themselves. By learning them thoroughly, through seeing them day by day on the walls, the child grows up with a knowledge of the best way to exterminate them.—Youth's Companion.

Liszt's Gypsy Protege.

The great pianist, who was passionately fond of the gypsies, once endeavored to educate and civilize a gypsy lad, but failed ignominiously. The wild spirit of the nature of countless generations could not be tamed, and though as a child liking the novelty of the new life the young gypsy submitted, but with a bad grace, to the instruction of the teacher Liszt provided, he soon broke loose, and became arrogant and inordinately conceited. However, his untutored playing was excellent, and he became the pet of those foolish women in society who are ever on the lookout for some new craze to feed their flighty craving after variety. Soon the child of nature pined for the freedom of the fields and savagery, and so he went. He ran away three times and was brought back, and then Liszt let him go for good.

In after years he turned up again in one of the numerous wandering gypsy orchestras, but he was only then a mediocre player—instruction had actually killed the real ability that as a child he had possessed. So was shattered one of the dreams of Liszt's life; he learned that a savage man could not be tamed quite so easily as a savage beast, as many had discovered before him.—Belgravia.